2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 ●758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

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Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré lil"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé lil"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.